

Wm Rogers J. 1773.

The Advantages
OF
REPENTANCE:

A
Moral Tale,

Attempted in Blank Verse;

AND FOUNDED ON THE
ANECDOTES
OF A

Private Family

In -----shire.

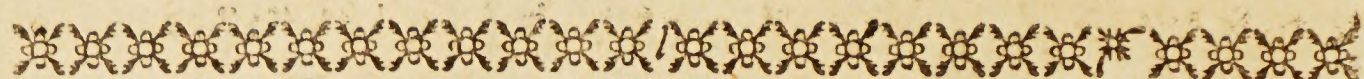
THE FOURTH EDITION.

———MURDER, though it have no Tongue, will speak
With most miraculous Organ.

Shakespeare's HAMLET.

L O N D O N, Printed.

N E W P O R T, Rhode-Island : Re-printed and
Sold by S. SOUTHWICK, in Queen-Street, 1772.



DEDICATION.

To Miss -----.

MADAM,

THE extraordinary particulars, on which the following poem is founded, and the means of their coming to my knowledge, you are as perfectly acquainted with as I am. Almost as soon as I conceived a design of giving them a poetical dress, I communicated it to you ; and your kind approbation was stamped on my manner of doing it, when the first hundred lines were scarce finished. This encouragement, if it did not enable me to execute my scheme in a more masterly manner, at least, it made me pursue it with greater pleasure ; and the work, I am confident, shews to much more advantage, by the alterations it has undergone, resulting from your delicate criticisms. To you, therefore, I consign it ; and beg it may remain a faithful (however unequal) memorial of the sincere esteem, with which

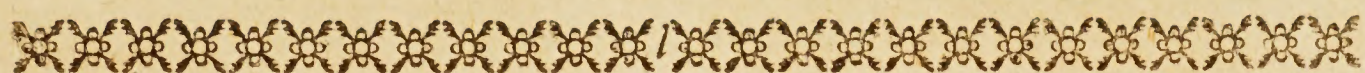
I am,

Dear Madam,

Your very affectionate Friend,

And obliged humble Servant,

The A U T H O R.



P R E F A C E.

AS the author of the following work does not presume, either to support or deny the REALITY OF APPARITIONS ; he chuses to decline all unnecessary suggestions on a subject, wherein every person has a right to enjoy his own opinion undisturbed ; and as it was conceived with a view of instruction, and the whole tendency is moral and just, he hopes, with the generality of readers, to pass uncensured for treating them with so PECULIAR A STORY.

If there should remain any over-scrupulous, or over-witty persons, who are inclined peremptorily to condemn, or illiberally to deride him, he begs leave to answer them with the sentiments of Mr. ADDISON, on such subjects, and those of LUCRETIVS, and JOSEPHUS, quoted by him, in the second volume of his SPECTATOR.

“ I think a person who is thus terrified with the imaginations of GHOSTS and SPECTRES, much more reasonable than one who, contrary to the reports of all historians, sacred and profane, ancient and modern, and to the traditions of all nations, thinks the APPEARANCE OF SPIRITS fabulous and groundless. Could I not give myself up to this general testimony of mankind, I should to the relations of particular persons, who are now living, and whom I cannot distrust in other matters of fact.” —

So

P R E F A C E.

So far Mr. ADDISON's own opinion.——He then proceeds——

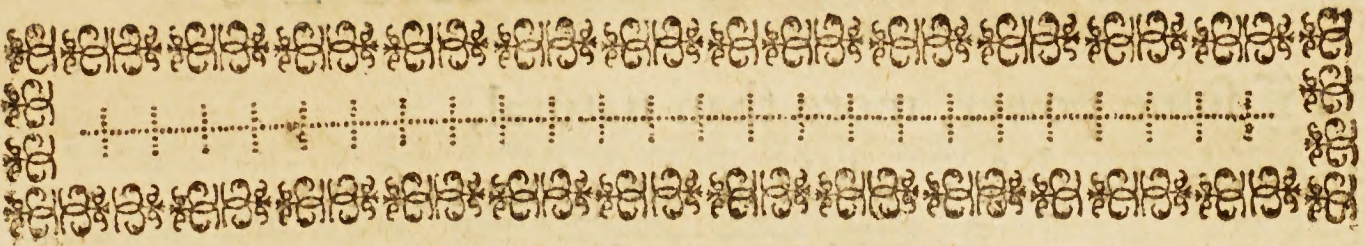
“ LUCRETIVS himself, though, by the course of his
“ philosophy, he was obliged to maintain that the soul did
“ not exist separate from the body, makes no doubt of
“ the REALITY OF APPARITIONS, AND THAT MEN HAVE
“ OFTEN APPEARED AFTER THEIR DEATH.”

And further having related, from JOSEPHUS, a circumstance of this kind, which befel GLAPHYRA, daughter of ARCHELAUS, he closes his discourse thus: “ The example deserves to be taken notice of, as it contains a most
“ certain proof of the IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, and
“ of divine providence. If any man thinks these facts
“ incredible, let him enjoy his own opinion to himself ; but let him not endeavour to disturb the belief
“ of others, who, by instances of this nature, are excited
“ to the study of virtue.”

To the testimony of this excellent modern writer, might likewise be added, the many striking uses which have been made, & noble purposes of justice, which have been effected, through the means of such extraordinary appearances, by several of our ancient poets, and particularly by that honor to nature and genius, our own immortal SHAKESPEARE.



T H E



The Advantages

O F

REPENTANCE.

DREADFUL the fate of him, whose hard'ned heart
Remorse could never pierce ! whose early youth,
To evil prone, hath drank the bitter cup
Of guilt, regardless of the poison, misery,
Wherewith it is imbrued ; till all his veins
Are fill'd and bloated with the dang'rous venom,
And health and ease, are flown ! mature in life,
Grown ripe in wickedness, and swoln with crimes,
Who finds his malady, yet dares refuse
The sweet, and wholesome draught of penitence,
Which the mind's great physician, conscience,
Even to the worst of men, will deign to offer.
Him sleepless nights, and loaded days weigh down
To blackness and despair ; to him remembrance
Is as a friend, that watches all his steps,
Stands in his path, and intercepts his walk ;
Makes ev'n the rushing wind alarm his sense,

As

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As if some power, more than natural,
 Rode on the gale ; while at the gloom of eve,
 From room to room, through all the house he flies,
 Scar'd by affright—and seeks, (alas ! how vain !)
 A moment's peace. At length, deep-furrow'd age,
 The herald of his dreadful end, appears,
 But to foretel the fatal stroke, and ring
 Loud peals of torment in his ears.—He dies
 Reluctant—screaming—fearing ev'n to lose
 A being, which he loaths—in his last pang,
 Vainly he rolls his struggling eye-balls round,
 To catch a single ray, to cheer his mind—
 But all is dark and comfortless—he dies.——

Not so the man of virtue—youth to him
 Is the fair plain of bliss ; his riper years
 Are the deep mines of wisdom, whence he draws
 Discretion, temp'rance, and a thousand rich
 Materials, to improve his after-hours
 With profit and delight ; when memory,
 Clad like a guardian spir't, a chaplet brings
 Rich with the flowers he cultur'd in his youth,
 And crowns his honest brow.—Thence, silver'd age
 Seems as the treasury of hoarded good,
 Joys well preserv'd ; and death, the blessed vale
 Of hope, and expectation—the dear path
 To happiness immortal——to his God.

Such was the state of SHENSTONE, virtuous man,

Who

‘ Who walk’d thro’ goodness, as he walk’d thro’ life,’ *
Whom the muse lov’d, and ever will lament ;
Fair wisdom, truth, and sense, of gen’rous worth,
Sat comely on his brow ; within his eye
Sweet charity, and meek humility,
Play’d lovely, and within his ample heart
The milk of human kindness copious flow’d—
Thus blameless, fearless, with a graceful smile
He met his fate, and fought his native skies.

Yet let not unenlighten’d minds suppose
No middle state between the extremes of vice
And virtue ;--heav’n, who made, well knows his creatures,
How weak, how frail ; and if, perchance, awhile
(As in the best it may) incautious youth
Hath suffer’d truth and constancy to slumber
Within the breast, and their best guard, discretion,
Deserts his charge, or slackens in his duty,
He looks with sorrowing eye ;---hear this ye rigid,
And if by happier talents ye have gain’d
Perfection’s mount, at least, with pity view,
With mildness judge the wretch, whom human weakness,
And venial errors doom to lag beneath.

REPENTANCE is the means, thro’ heav’n’s dear grace,
Which from the blotted sheet of life can wipe
A thousand errors ; and the king of heav’n
Hath mercy and compassion, more, I trust,

Than

* See *Visions in verse. Death.* Page 127.

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Than man hath pow'r of sinning. Hence, be warn'd,
 Ye wicked tribe ! ne'er think the hour too late,
 The crime too black, the means of Grace too distant.
 They cannot be, if true remorse of heart,
 And sorrow for the crime, attend your prayer ;
 However bad, betake ye to your knees ;
 Think ye address your counsellor, your friend,
 Your father, who, with readiness of love,
 Will raise, and comfort his repentant child,
 And lead him to the mansions of delight,
 Reserv'd for such as love his holy laws.

Nay, ev'n on earth, or time's recorded page
 Is sullied with untruth, the virtue, penitence,
 Hath met a large reward.—Is there who doubts ?
 With candid patience let him here peruse
 The moral tale, which, in expression weak,
 And tuneless numbers, I attempt to sing.

THRICE had the sun renew'd his annual course,
 Since hapless EDWARD, on the sultry plains
 Of India, had endur'd encreasing woes,
 And number'd all his moments by afflictions.
 When the fourth year began to store the earth
 With fruits and flowers, unlimited expanse,
 And prodigality of bounty, EDWARD
 Arose one morn, cheer'd by refreshing sleep,
 Which long had been a stranger to his bed.
 His heart was light within him, and his eye
 Look'd clear around ; the dross within his breast,
 Which lim'd his soul to guilt, seem'd purg'd away ;

He

He heav'd the soft'ning sigh, and, as by instinct,
 Bent low to heav'n—a posture new to him !—
 He did not pray—he knew not what to ask.—
 While thus 'twixt doubt and fore dismay suspended,
 Officious mem'ry set before his view
 An awful register of sad misdeeds ;
 He gaz'd astonish'd ;—here a dow'rless sister
 Upbraided him, for leaving her, at large,
 To wander thro' a false and treach'rous world
 Without a brother's safe-conducting hand :
 There a weak mother, sore oppress'd with age
 And poverty, let fall a sacred drop,
 And cried, “ Thus is it with me.”—Down he sunk,
 And in a torrent of religious tears
 Let loose the fullness of his swelling heart ;
 Wide, fast, and copious did they flow ; as erst
 The streams forth delug'd from the harden'd rock,
 Touch'd, and resolv'd by MOSES' holy wand.

His pains awhile relieved, EDWARD aloud
 Discharg'd his grief ;—“ Ah woe is me ! thus toss'd
 “ Upon a foreign shore, robb'd of relief,
 “ Of hope ; no sorrowing sister to condole,
 “ No mother to advise ! no more I boast
 “ A feeling friend, to share my nearest wo,
 “ And ease me of a part ; where is the man,
 “ Whom once I wrap'd close, close within my heart,
 “ And call'd his soul my own ?—He's lost—estrang'd—
 “ And justly—since, with rash misguided step,
 “ I left a parent comfortless ; a sister
 “ Friendless, and unprotected, whom my labours

B

“ Might

“ Might have preserv’d to better fate than now
 “ I fear, attends them. What have I attain’d
 “ By one black deed, one moment’s cursed work,
 “ But anguish and despair? Each slender morsel
 “ Earn’d by hard labour, and each niggard draught
 “ Embitter’d by distress, Oh! were that morsel
 “ The honest meed of virtue, and that draught
 “ The pay of genuine worth, how sweet, how grateful!
 “ But, as it is—how nauseous—hence!—away!
 “ No more I’ll bear this massacre of life,
 “ This ruin of the soul.—There is a power,
 (“ Or nature whispers to my heart in vain)
 “ Who can and will restore me to myself:
 “ To him, to him I bend—and here disclaim
 “ The vices of my youth; Oh! could I wipe
 “ Their traces from my mind!—That cannot be—
 “ Amidst transgressions huge and num’rous, ONE
 “ Stands foremost, ne’er to be expung’d; ONE CRIME
 “ Which even to myself I dare not name.
 “ But if deep sorrow, and sincere remorse,
 “ May ought avail to expiate the sin,
 “ Tis now within me, and shall there remain
 “ The tenant of my bosom.—If my God,
 “ (That name! how sweet it sounds upon my ear!)
 “ Deigns to accept my offer’d penitence,
 “ I yet may triumph o’er distress; I yet
 “ May shield a sister; yet relieve a mother;
 “ And, far as mem’ry will admit, may cure
 “ My mind’s wide wounds, and chase her throbs away.”

He spoke, and rose—then to his custom’d task

Flew

Flew nimbly, gladness in his eye, and speed
Play'd on his feet ; no more the hard-earn'd meal
Seem'd tasteless, but, by quick concoction, turn'd
To florid health, and vigour, while the draught
Ran fresh within the veins, and quicken'd life.
He toil'd—he prosper'd—every moment gave
Some large addition to his store, and heav'n
Indulgent smil'd on all he undertook.

Mean while his mother, tender, good MARIA,
On ALBION's isle left sorrowing, pin'd away
In anguish for a son ; her only stay
In life was lost ; her daughter's sole defence ;
Since torn from fortune in their earlier days,
His industry alone maintain'd the pair.

Whene'er she ventur'd, all alone, to ope
The volume of her mind, she saw him her's,
And lost, in one sad moment—snatch'd away,
As 'twere, by sudden fate—one hour the board
Smil'd at his presence—on the next, was blank—
And fruitless ev'ry eye look'd forth for EDWARD :
No traces left of him ; his course unknown,
His motives, his distress.—In vain inquiry
Panted on ev'ry various wind to find him.
Thus o'er their sorrows did this couple brood,
And drink their falling tears, when ghastly poverty
Intruded, and, with meagre, hungry look,
Appall'd each comely visage ; wide he strode,
And, with a horrid joy, cry'd, “ All is mine.”

What hope remains, alas ! for worth distress'd,
 And modest want, unless some noble being
 Comes timely, like a minister of heav'n,
 To succour and redress ; in largess wide,
 To pour his bounties, and prevent the blush,
 Ere yet it rises on the conscious cheek
 Of merit, undispos'd, unus'd to ask ?

Such was MARIA's happy lot ! (Ah ! would
 The sons of fortune, oft'ner deign t' regard
 The claims of worth distress'd ' casting thereon
 Their superflux, and shewing heav'n more just !) †
 Such was MARIA's lot ! For young HORATIO,
 Who long had doated on fair ANNA's charms,
 Half wither'd in their bloom, step'd forth, and ask'd
 The maiden of MARIA, ask'd her hand
 With humble diffidence, as one who held
 Nought in his pow'r to give, and all to beg ;
 Yet him the luxury of wealth enrich'd,
 And plenteous meads enclos'd. The mother blush'd ;
 Blush'd for a dow'rless daughter, and refus'd
 The lover's ardent suit—'till well assur'd
 That fond affection long before had tied
 Their hearts reciprocal, she gave her last,
 Her only bliss away, pour'd forth her blessings
 Profusely o'er the new-match'd pair—then turn'd
 To seek the house of poverty again,
 And mate with lonely wo !---When thus the youth---

“ Much

† See Shakespeare's King Lear,

“ Much as I doat on ANNA’s worth, and live
“ But in her smile, a something yet to life
“ Were wanting, if MARIA will not grace
“ My home. In earliest youth, alas ! I lost
“ The name of Son, the blessing of a parent ;
“ Nor could the ample fortunes, thence deriv’d,
“ Requite me for that loss ; O ! be it now
“ Repair’d in thee ! Be thou my guardian ! parent !
“ Be Witness to my care, my love of ANNA,
“ And share our happiness, my second mother !”

He staid not for reply---but hasty seiz’d
Her hand, half yielding, half reluctant ; seiz’d,
And led her to his home ; where every moment
Came wing’d with new delight.---His life to ANNA
Was all attentive love ; to good MARIA,
All reverence and esteem ; each word had awe,
Each look respect, and every favour grace ;
He gave, as one who knew not that he gave,
Or wist not what it meant. ANNA, enrich’d
With all that love or fortune could bestow,
Was happiest of the happy ; and the mother
(Save when the thought of EDWARD, hapless youth !
Struck on her mem’ry) felt a smile return,
And joy rekindle in her aged heart.
Thus flew twelve years on pleasure’s silken wing,
And all was comfort, peace, and happiness.

Now had the banish’d man, persisting still
In penitence to heav’n, and love of virtue,

Accumulated

Accumulated wealth, beyond the bounds
 Of what his largest hope display'd ; and yearn'd
 (Spite of the fears that linger'd round his heart)
 With ardent wish, to seek his native clime ;
 To see if ANNA's youth was yielded up
 A prey to lawless love ; if early sorrow
 Had nipt the bud, and blasted all the fruit ;
 Whether again 'twere given him to behold
 A mother's face, to tend and cheer her age
 With duteous care and love, or to bedew
 Her sacred manes with religious tears.
 This lesson had repentance taught his mind.—

“ Let no weak terrors for thyself withhold
 “ Thy duteous steps, or stop thy bounty's course ;
 “ Thy mother may survive, and want the pittance
 “ Thou deal'st to every stranger ; thou may'st now
 “ Raise up her feeble head, restore her heart,
 “ And brighten up her eve of life ; obey——
 “ A debt to nature is a debt to GOD.”

His treasure safe on board, auspicious winds
 Swell'd big the bellying sails ; old ocean boil'd
 Around the cleaving keel ; so swift the course,
 That wind and vessel seem'd throughout to vie
 In vigor of despatch ; hence the fifth moon,
 E'er quite her course was done, (one April morn,
 The hills new ting'd with gold) beheld him safe
 On English ground ! Delight unspeakable

To hearts unknown to vice ! The guileless man,
Whom search of foreign wealth provokes, or care
Of merchandize incites, or (hapless state !)
Disastrous war compels awhile to leave
His native climate and connections dear,
At his long-wish'd return, regaining all,
What joys are his ! He stops, and, panting, asks
His heart, if all be true ; he seems new-born,
And drinks, in frequent gasps of happiness,
Large draughts of his own air.---Not so poor EDWARD---
Anxious affright, and doubt oppresses his heart,
And stifles, in its birth, the rising transport.
More weight of years, and grief's deforming hand,
Had alter'd ev'ry feature ; from his visage
The vacant smile of dissipated life,
And empty joy was flown ; while solid sense,
And manly reason, and discretion fair,
Supply'd the place ; ah ! unavailing all
To chase his fears !---Beneath a deep disguise
He veil'd each trace of what he once appear'd ;
Lest when he saw (were such his happy lot)
His aged parent, strong surprise might seize
Her palsy'd nerves, and nature quit her hold.
The dwelling, once familiar to his foot,
With trembling, hasty step, he seeks---Each eye,
Each passing glance alarms him ; seems to cleave
His wounded soul, and lay each thinking bare.
The threshold gain'd, while yet his shaking hand

Su'd

Su'd for admittance, prone he fell---o'er-spent---
And to the kind inhabitants appear'd
A breathless coarfe.---With charitable care
They rais'd him up, and by appliance meet,
Quick'n'd the pulse, and bad it flow anew.

Reviv'd, and of his proper course inform'd,
(O blessings on each kindly-temper'd heart,
Which thus relieves the stranger) on he hastes
To seek, while ev'ry conscious fear return'd,
A mother's presence. She, her earliest meal
Despatch'd, had totter'd forth, as was her wont,
And gain'd her fav'rite seat ; where, each new morn,
She gaz'd with new delight, and, in his works,
Ador'd the GOD of nature ; paid her thanks
For joys, so far beyond the stretch of hope,
Show'r'd on her age, and, with one pious wish
For EDWARD'S virtue and return, concluded
Her daily orison. For now her mind,
By time made pliant, had receiv'd the stamp
Of that great necessary means of happiness,
Submission to her fate—Thus flow'd her hours
Tranquil and smooth, as glides the summer lake ;
If, chance, a sudden sigh awhile deform'd
Her sweet serenity of soul, 'twas slight,
And momentary as the passing breeze ;
For pure religion cannot long desert
Her willing vot'ries, but repairs the grace

With

With added lustre, as returning suns
Dispel the transient gloom, and bid the stream
Again be smooth and clear—nigh where she sat,
Was passion-tortur'd EDWARD doom'd to pass ;
Big with a thousand various apprehensions,
These words alarm'd his ear. “ And, if he yet
“ Survives, O be he worthy of thy care,
“ 'Tis all I beg.” He turn'd him to the sound,
And saw—what long he stopp'd not to survey,
But on the pinions of distraction flew,
Knelt, and embrac'd, and wept upon a mother.
Struck with affright ’—“ And who art thou, she cry'd,
“ That thus”—when, as he press'd her trembling knee,
With couchant face, all bath'd in drops of shame,
A scar, which boyish negligence had thrown
Broad o'er his neck, awoke remembrance in her
Too strong to bear—Scarce had she pow'r to say
“ Art thou indeed my long lost joy ?” A sigh,
Which shook, and all unnever'd her aged frame,
Burst forth, and on the fav'rite seat she dropp'd.
Swift to his duteous care the youth arose,
And “ O forgive the desp'rate haste, he cried,
“ Forgive my zeal, my eagerness of love ;
“ I meant, at leisure, to disclose myself,
“ But nature would not let me.”—Motionless
She still remain'd :—“ And have I thus destroy'd—
“ My only means of bliss ?—Forbid it heav'n !—
“ The dearest purpose of my life !” Then ran,

And call'd aloud for aid, himself unfit,
 Unknowing how to act.—Forth from the portal
 HORATIO, ANNA, and domestics burst
 Alarm'd, and haste instinctively to save
 Their mansion's honor. From the neighb'ring spring
 They draw the happy means.—Once more her eye
 Beam'd on the day, tho' faint ; it stray'd around
 With timid glance, till on her EDWARD's face
 It rested full ; then from the seat she sprung,
 As if returning youth new-strung her nerves,
 And, in her joy triumphant, cry'd, " Behold him !
 " More than I dar'd to ask, is now bestow'd——
 " I have a son again ;" then eager plung'd
 Into his clasping arms, and there remain'd,
 Till fainting nature had repair'd her strength,
 Resolving all her burthen into tears ;
 That sacred dew, which heav'n, in mercy, gave
 To loads of anguish, or excess of joy.

Th' assistant crowd stand speechless—motionless—
 And, in each other's eye, alternate seek,
 And read the cause of their amaze ; till EDWARD,
 (His pious mother having sought relief,
 On the same seat, where late she lifeless lay,
 From passions, which too exquisitely press'd
 Her shatter'd frame) ran, frantic in his joy,
 To ANNA, to HORATIO ; o'er and o'er
 He seiz'd them, and, in wildness of embrace,
 Seem'd to devour their loves—on ev'ry visage,

Well

Well as he could, he cast a look---when lo !
Against a mourning cypress, PHILIP old
Lean'd to support his weight of joy---a man
Of more than fourscore years---whom EDWARD's father
From infancy had rear'd ; their tempers, customs,
And sentiments alike---hence counsellor,
Not Steward, was he call'd---oft had he giv'n
Advice, clear, just, and wholesome to our youth,
When early joys, and mad pursuits seduc'd him,
Which when he found neglected and despis'd,
Frequent he rais'd a bitter sigh, and said,
“ My good old master, happy, happy thou,
“ Whom the dark tomb enclos'd, e're this thou saw'st !”
Soon as the eye of EDWARD caught his form,
And own'd his rev'rend locks, confusion stopp'd
The purport of his tongue ; his heart was full ;
But on his knee dropp'd sudden, he breath'd forth,
From fervent heart, a thousand, thousand blessings,
Silent, tho' not ineloquent---he long'd
To ask, how he had weather'd out the storm
Of want and sorrow ; which the elder reading
In his inquiring eye, thus spake.—“ I live
“ To see thy face once more, thou comely copy
“ Of my old master !—Know, that righteous power,
“ Who saw my truth, and gratitude to him,
“ Rais'd me another guardian in HORATIO ;
“ Since thy departure, by his bounty fed,
“ I've seen thy father's virtues all renew'd,
“ His grace, as well as love of doing good,

“ And liv’d o’er life again ; my joy’s so full
 “ By this last gift, what have I now to do,
 “ But bless my GOD, and die ?”—“ To live, to live,
 “ Exclaim’d the youth, and see an alter’d man”—
 Then rose and clasp’d him——more he would have said,
 When a kind summons from their host, who late
 Retir’d with his domestics, and prepar’d
 The genial board, (while ANNA tended duteous
 On her MARIA) warn’d them in—he turn’d,
 And help’d to raise a mother—she (supported
 On either hand) betwixt her children mov’d,
 Not meanly proud of two such props ; now one,
 Now ey’d the other, and with graceful joy
 Enter’d the house.—Old PHILIP follow’d weeping.

Around the social board, profusely spread,
 Raptur’d they take their sev’ral seats ; but short,
 And tasteless was the meal ; fond recollection,
 How long they hopeless languish’d for so dear
 An interview, subdu’d e’en nature’s claim,
 Of sweet refreshment : Incoherent phrase,
 Short sighs, and interchange of softest looks,
 That teem’d with all the fulness of affection,
 Supply’d the place.—While now the genial glass,
 Crown of the meal, went round, their honest host,
 Extravagantly glad, contriv’d new joys
 To grace the coming time, bade night descend
 Copious in mirth, with all that music’s pow’r,
 Or festive dance cou’d add, to cheer the soul,

And

And make the hours look gay : Thus, far abroad
His fancy flew for fresh and rare delights,
To form a life of bliss—when EDWARD thus—

“ Dear by each tie of infant friendship, dear
“ By gen’rous love, and soul beneficent,
“ Who hast, with pious care, reliev’d, and cheer’d
“ Hearts dearer than my own.—I know not how
“ To speak my gratitude—yet Oh ! permit
“ That, for one night, the revel be suspended ;
“ And let, Oh ! let the present hours attest
“ My piety of joy ! with liberal alms,
“ That dearest sacrifice to gracious heav’n,
“ Be mark’d the day, which, on its due return,
“ Yearly I mean to hallow ! New deliver’d
“ From galling bonds of vice, and thus restor’d
“ To ev’ry comfort, ev’ry great enjoyment,
“ That faultless virtue could alone expect,
“ What can I less ? Or how look up to heav’n,
“ Begging a kind continuance of his smile,
“ With such a faith, as in that moment, when
“ O’er misery and age I pour my soul
“ In floods of charity ? This day exempt
“ From every other work, this single day,
“ Each hour of life beside I consecrate
“ To filial love and friendship.”—“ Be it so,
“ Return’d HORATIO, and unite we all
“ In this thy truly charitable task !”

Hence converse sweet, instructive, pious, grateful,

Full

Full of the grace of providence to man,
 His wond'rous pow'r, and will to * "scatter good,
 "As in a waste of bounty," cheer'd the soul,
 Till ruddy eve, with golden ray bedeck'd,
 Descended lovely, and around her threw
 Her beauties wide and lavish ; vallies smil'd ;
 The breeze flew light ; more clear and smooth the stream ;
 Proud were the hills ; with more than wonted fragrance
 Each flower enrich'd the gale ; in livelier notes
 Birds fill'd the air ; as nature's self were glad
 To view th' approaching scene—for now the portal
 Capacious stretch'd, t' admit a wretched throng,
 Call'd from the adjacent town (well-known to those
 Who steer directly o'er ———'s furze-blown heath)
 With pious care and speed, and each sad object
 Encounter'd on the way ; by various woes,
 And various wants, reduc'd to drag with pain
 A living death ;—each ghastly form was there,
 That poverty, from out her rueful cave,
 Herself could draw, to hurt the eye of man,
 And wound the pitying breast—decrepid age
 Bent underneath its load—sad widowhood,
 With sunken eye, and deep entrenched feature,
 Pin'd inly—tender orphan eyes were wash'd
 In early drops—and forrowing fathers mourn'd
 Their Infants, by the gripe of meagre famine,
 Snatch'd newly. Lo ! beneath the sacred roof
 No eye, no hand, no heart was unemploy'd ;

All

* See Congreve's *Mourning Bride*, Act II.

All, all united in the virtuous task,
To chase distress, or bid affliction smile,
And saw their fair endeavours well repaid.
Age bloom'd afresh—here widow'd breasts were cheer'd,
And sung with gratitude—their children wip'd
Their eyes, and fed.—Transported EDWARD seem'd
On ev'ry side at once ; from ev'ry object
Drew new delight—of food, and alms, his largesse
He dealt so copious, that the ravish'd taker
Was scant of pow'r to catch the lib'ral blessing,
Ere fall'n to earth ; then took the goblet large,
And to the thirsty soul gave draughts of bliss
Immeasurable ; while the rest apart
New stores accumulate, therewith completing
Such sacred rites, as, here and there, the youth,
Thro' fervent duty, and religious haste,
“ Left § needy eyes shou'd tarry long,” had left
Unfinish'd.——Thus employ'd, before him stood,
Unseen till now, a terrifying form !
Within the hagard face, distracted fear,
And writhing pain, and agonizing grief,
Had struck their talons deep ; the bushy locks
With crimson streams were clotted, and uprear'd ;
From hollow eye look'd forth reproachful sorrow,
And damp'd the pious joy, so newly born
In EDWARD's heart ; his glow of blood forsook
His cheek ; all cold, and clammy, o'er his brow

Big

§ See *Ecclesiasticus*, Chap. iv.

Big drops were spread ; his nerves unstrung, the cup
 Fell from his feeble grasp ; a statue he
 Of wild amazement, while within his ears
 (Almost the only sense, which now remain'd)
 These heart astounding accents hideous rung.

“ Not for myself do I approach thee, youth,
 “ Or beg thy charity,——but for a wife,
 “ And two poor children, who, for more than twelve
 “ Long years, have linger'd out their days in want.
 “ While strength was theirs, they eat the hard-earn'd
 “ morsel,
 “ And drank the passing stream ; now deadly sickness
 “ So sore oppresses them, scarce can they raise
 “ Their worn-out limbs from earth—Oh ! if thou hast
 “ One crime, which, more than all the rest, fits heavy
 “ Upon thy soul, and hop'st, at thy last hour,
 “ That crime shall be forgiven—follow me'!——

As by a pow'r from heav'n impell'd, the youth
 Flew forth, and follow'd ; by HORATIO's eye
 Alone observ'd, who trac'd his frantic steps ;
 Which, till they reach'd the venerable relicks
 Of an old ruin'd convent, rested not :—
 There, westward of the gloomy grove, which gave
 A distant, solemn prospect to the pile,
 Beneath the mould'ring fabric's awful height,
 The form, which thus had drawn th' affrighted youth,
 Darting an eye of rigour, cried, “ Redress,”

And

And vanish'd from his sight.—Awhile he stood
As one just waken'd from a trance, and roll'd
His eye-balls wildly round, big with surprise
And horror !—till HORATIO, fore alarm'd,
Left, smote by frenzy strange, imperial reason
Were from her throne remov'd, seiz'd quick his hand,
Assaying to recall his sense ;—in vain—
Eager and loud he cries, “ Where is he ? Speak !
“ I cou'd not be deceiv'd—my eye—my heart,
“ In dreadful sympathy, acknowledg'd him ;
“ The wound was fresh again, the fatal gash
“ How wide it yawn'd for vengeance ! The red stream
“ Again it boil'd, and, with unrighteous stain,
“ Crimson'd the golden locks !—Redress thee !—ay,
“ Or may my woes ne'er cease ! The hand, that smote,
“ This moment shall revenge thee !”—From his gripe,
(No quick nor easy task) HORATIO wrench'd,
And threw the desp'rate weapon far——then forc'd
Th' enfeebled victim of despair to press
The ragged flint, while he, by ev'ry art,
That friendship could suggest, by look, by speech,
By pray'r, and pious tears, assay'd to calm
The tempest in his mind ; full well he saw
Some pow'r, superior far to idle fancy,
Assail'd the shatter'd brain. From EDWARD's eye,
At length, burst forth a sympathetic flood,
And, in disjointed accents, thus he spoke :

“ Thou should'st not be a stranger here—forgive,

D

“ Forgive

“ Forgive a man, just sunk in misery !
 “ But I’ll atone it ;—yes, belov’d HORATIO,
 “ Fast as my heart permits, I’ll tell thee all ;
 “ Know then, the dreadful cause (to mortal breast
 “ Yet unreveal’d, and by thy truth, thy love,
 “ Thy hope of future blessings, I conjure thee,
 “ From ev’ry other ear preserve it close !)
 “ Of my removal from my native shore,
 “ My friends—my duty—then, when boiling youth
 “ Ran madly thro’ my veins—(too well thou know’st
 “ The fatal time) was THIS (Oh guilt ! I tremble
 “ To give it utt’rance)—know, I carried with me
 “ A conscience black for MURDER !—Hast thou ear
 “ For more, or shall I stop ?——One fatal eve,
 “ The sun, as now, had just retir’d, (afraid
 “ To view the deed) with rash, and coward hand,
 “ (Swill’d hot with wine, and fir’d by frantic rage,
 “ At some slight breath) I smote a surly hind—
 “ Smote him—and life was gone.—I fondly hop’d
 “ That penitence, which deep within my heart
 “ Pour’d her soft balm, had cur’d the rankling sore,
 “ And bade my mind be still.—My hope was vain !
 “ ’Tis not for me to know repose ; ev’n now
 “ The form was with me ; nay, it liv’d, it look’d,
 “ It spoke——exact the same with that, my memory
 “ Bears, and will ever bear !—what might this mean ?
 “ Calls it not loud for vengeance ? Shou’d I not
 “ Submit me willing to the law, and pay
 “ The price of blood with blood ?—Nay, speak in mercy.”

Silent

Silent and fixt they sat, and pious grief
With pious grief engag'd ; their level'd eyes
Smote, and transfix'd each other——Soul with soul
Convers'd, and speech was useless——When a yell
Of woe, which cleft alike their ears, and hearts,
Awoke them——round the ruin'd walls (which long
Retain'd, and to each other rattled shrill
The piercing sound) they trembling seek the cause.
'Tis found.—Within a clammy, clay-built hut,
(Which, for support, clung to the solemn stone)
With sticks and straws o'erlaid, whose scant enclosure
Receiv'd each gust of the ever shifting wind,
Yielded to ev'ry falling flint, and drank
Each drenching show'r, a form, with pallid want
And misery o'erspread, lay stretch'd on earth,
And seem'd as, in that moment, life had left
Her wretched mansion ; of attire so bare,
'Twas misery's sad emblem !—EDWARD knelt—
And, while his heart ran o'er with pity, rais'd
The dying frame—then clasp'd within his bosom,
To kindle warmth, and sooth back wand'ring breath ;
Supplying thus, with charitable care,
The sacred task of two enfeebled children,
Who, in their slender arms, had long sustain'd
That load of anguish ; but worn out, at last,
Despoil'd of all their strength, perforce, they gave
Their burthen to the ground, and, in that cry
Of mad despair, instinctive seem'd to ask
From heaven that aid, they cou'd no longer give.

With dubious aspect EDWARD eyes his charge—
 Now thinks a fainter flush betints the cheek ;
 Now seems the lid, with weak essay, to court
 A ray of light ; and now, within the bosom,
 Deep seems the struggling breath to sob—but all
 So short, and so imperfect, that his hopes
 Die, ere they well are born.—Just then HORATIO
 (Who in that very moment, when the scene
 First met his eye, on mercy's wings, had flown
 To the next neighb'ring cottage) came supply'd
 With food and cordial bev'rage ; wholesome wines,
 Such as the birch, or cowslip's yellow leaf,
 Yield to the dextrous housewife's art ;—o'erjoy'd
 EDWARD beholds ; and, with united care,
 Between them they support the famish'd wretch ;
 Dealing with prudent, not with niggard hand,
 Scanty and slow relief ; by soft degrees,
 Soliciting the coy return of life.

During their task, (O man ! how graceful thou
 In such befitting offices engag'd !)

The elder girl, on whom some fourteen years
 Had set their goodly mark, thus answer'd sweet
 HORATIO's earnest questions.—“ 'Tis indeed

“ My mother, sir, my good loving mother,
 “ Who from the little, that her labour earn'd,
 “ Gave us the largest share—stinting herself
 “ To feed her children.—Illness now has long
 “ Made her unfit to labour, and the bounty
 “ Of charitable passengers has been

“ Our

“ Our only means of living—oftentimes,
“ When in the height of poverty and pain,
“ I’ve heard her wish to die, and say, her heart
“ Was dead, long, long ago, and, weeping fore,
“ She oft related all the dismal cause——
“ That when she went with child, and was far gone
“ Of my young sister, sir, who stands beside you,
“ (There is but two years between us) one sad night,
“ Expecting my poor father to his supper,
“ From ev’ning work, he was brought to her murder’d--
“ His head and face all over blood—by whom
“ ’Twas done, she never knew.” The friends, at once,
From burning cheeks, and fire-emitting eyes,
Flash’d wonder on each other ; EDWARD starting,
Forgot his charge, and to a place remote
Flew, to discharge the fulness of his mind.

Now the tough father of the bounteous cot,
Whence good HORATIO brought the timely food,
(The ev’ning duties of his farm discharg’d)
Returning with the guardian of his door,
His honest mastiff, seeks his homely board,
With nature’s plain and wholesome diet crown’d ;
Where with his wife, his children, and domestics,
He wont to share the social hour, to hear
The waggish joke, and join the shout of mirth ;
Or with delight repeat the labours past,
Retread the paths along the pasture fair,
Remount the sloping hill, review, with glee,

Thro’

Thro' fancy's magic glass, the rising grain ;
 And thus, in nature's honest feelings, pay
 The God of harvest not unwelcome praise.
 Scarce was HORATIO gone, when he arriv'd—
 (HORATIO, lord of ev'ry flow'ry lawn,
 Each fertile mead, and deep-embow'ring grove,
 For many miles around—HORATIO, friend
 To the distress'd, and father of the poor ;
 The tenant's pride and fav'rite !) from his dame
 The toiling rustic learns the strange event,
 The place, the pressing cause—deserts his meal,
 And hour of mirth, and with his jolly sons,
 Three sturdy, sun-burn'd lads, goes forth in haste,
 To seek the presence of his much lov'd lord,
 And proffer honest aid, in homespun phrase.

Weak nature now, in some degree, repair'd,
 And vital sense, and quick'ning warmth restor'd,
 To them HORATIO glad resigns his charge ;
 Entreating, with religious care, their home
 Might take the strangers in, and feed their wants,
 Till he resum'd the task ; then seeks his friend
 Around the venerable walls—where fix'd,
 And silent, he surprises him, with hands
 Still clasp'd, tho' fall'n, and heav'n-ward swelling eyes,
 That teem'd with holy wonder—"Gracious God !"
 Was all the raptur'd man could say ;—HORATIO,
 Wistful how much he felt, with meek deport
 Engag'd his arm, then, with assuasive speech,
Strengthen'd

Strengthen'd by reason, born of righteous zeal,
Pour'd balm into his soul, as he beguil'd
His wayward steps to seek their friendly home.
" 'Tis as thy soul divines—nay seek no more
" That wretched form—all thy fond soul could ask,
" To gratify the present wish, is done—
" Harbour, and rest, and peaceful bread is her's.
" From her own mouth, when pow'r of speech, at last,
" Tho' weak, return'd, I gain'd unerring proofs——
" With temper hear, and as thou hear'st, adore
" The wonder-working hand, (for such I deem it !)
" Which led thee thro' the maze of this great day ;
" Then to thy adoration join, with me,
" This firm belief, that from thy life alone
" Redress is claim'd.—No more, by impious stroke,
" Or rash resolve, reduce thy date of years,
" But patient wait, till providence demands thee !
" Oh ! * tarry thou his leisure !—if aright
" I judge, (and not presumptuous be it held !)
" He hath not cast thee off, nor holds thy deed,
" Tho' foul, inexpiable——he regards,
" With mercy's eye, I trust, the erring hand
" Of youth, and rage—and sees, thy heart explor'd,
" No love of guilt, no black intention there.
" What voice, but his, could call ? Why interrupt
" The pious office, which engag'd thy soul ?—
" Doth it not seem to say——Behold I shew
" A greater duty far, a nearer claim

" Upon

* See the Psalms.

“ Upon thy charity, and undischarg’d,
 “ The rest avail thee lightly ?—Oh ! pursue
 “ The wond’rous track, obey the great command,
 “ And all may yet be well.”—“ Thou best of friends,”
 EDWARD return’d, (with soften’d heart, and speech,
 “ And eyes, that melted in affection’s dew)
 “ Thy breath is comfort to my heart ; thy words,
 “ With all conviction’s force, assail my sense ;
 “ To this great duty will I dedicate
 “ My future hours, and leave the rest to heav’n ;
 “ And if he hath not wholly cast me off,
 “ Nor holds my crime, tho’ foul, inexpiable,
 “ May I, when I neglect this earthly task,
 “ His purpos’d mercy forfeit !”—Mild discourse
 Thus sooths, and cheers their hearts reciprocal,
 Till in their sight the dear abode appears :
 Where the forsaken family (furnishing
 Some distant act of goodness call’d the friends,
 With grace united, forth) completed well
 The righteous work at home : And, ere they sent
 The guests rejoicing forth, surcharg’d with stores,
 They blest’d the day, and bad its due return
 With annual rites of charity be hallow’d.
 EDWARD, unsuited now to any converse
 But that of his own mind, requests his friend
 To gloss his absence with some fair excuse,
 And to his chamber, calm and clear, retires.

The chamber gain’d, with care, anxious haste,
 The door he clos’d, forbidding e’en a breath

Of

Of transient air, shou'd interrupt his thought :
Beside his couch, in zeal precipitate,
Plunging his knees, " Almighty Father !
" (If yet by that dear name I dare invoke thee)
" Beam, from thy throne of mercy, one kind ray
" Of comfort on my breast, and teach my heart
" How, in my conduct, I may best atone
" My former guilt, and, in my hours to come,
" Deserve thy gracious care—to all, that may
" Find favour in thy sight, far as I know,
" I here devote me—ev'ry morn and eve
" My heart shall duly seek thee—duly praise
" Thy wond'rous pow'r, beneficence, and mercy ;
" No day unmark'd by charity shall pass ;
" But chief, th' unhappy, whom my fatal hand,
" By one dire act, (Oh ! Pardon ! Pardon ! Pardon !)
" Made poor and widow'd—she shall never know
" A care, while life remains, if I have power
" To chase it from her breast—my fortune's stream
" Shall flow unbounded o'er her wants, and feed
" Her wither'd heart with plenty—to her children
" I'll be another father in my love ;
" And, if thy goodness, Oh ! my GOD, permit
" A length of days, for this my pious purpose,
" My gratitude shall bless thee ;——if denied,
" Right willing I submit——in ev'ry thing,
" Be prais'd thy justice, and thy will be done !"

Heart-eas'd he rose ;—then to his pillow quick
Repairs, and coming night (whose thicken'd gloom
E He

He wont not to behold without dismay,
Reluctant horror, each alarm of soul,
That apprehension breeds in conscious guilt,)
With earnest suit, he now invokes, in sleep
To shed relief on his much harrafs'd sense :
His suit was heard—and sleep, on downy plumes
Descending soft, envelop'd all the man :
When to his mental eye the very phantom,
Which, all so late, disturb'd his inmost soul,
Once more appear'd, but clad in other guise :
In the late hagard face, distracted fear,
And writhing pain, and agonizing grief,
No more were seen ; no more the bushy locks
With crimson drops were clotted and uprear'd :
Each placid feature seem'd by gentle peace
Becalm'd, and satisfaction's sweetest smile
Beam'd lovely ; soft content, in meek array,
Dwelt on the brow, and decent lay the locks :
So mild the form, tranquility therein
Seem'd to have fix'd her residence entire,
Immoveable, eternal :—Thus it spake,
While drops of comfort, from each sacred breath,
Melted on EDWARD's heart, as kindly dews,
From heaven descending soft on new-born flowers.
“ Repentant soul, sleep now a quiet sleep ;
“ My pray'r is heard, my wishes are accomplished
“ Thou now hast made a full redress—awake
“ To care and grief no more ; henceforth, be guilt,
“ And pain, and sorrow, strangers to thy breast,
“ But peace, with all her train, inhabit there,

“ And

“ And pleasure strew thy paths ! Thro’ mortal life
“ Safe be thy course, and long ! Smooth be the bed
“ Of death, and fairest gleams of op’ning bliss
“ Shine on thy parting spirit ! Since REPENTANCE
“ In never-failing streams hath wash’d away
“ The stains of guilt, and well thou hast discharg’d
“ Thy debt to JUSTICE, CHARITY and GOD !”
So spake the form benign ; nor seem’d to leave
The blessed couch, till morn, with rosy hand,
Expanded full the golden gates of light :
Refresh’d, and full of gladness, EDWARD rose ;
First wafted grateful praise, with holy zeal,
Then sought, in haste, his friend ; and o’er, and o’er,
Revolv’d, and repossess’d the vision fair,
With wonder and delight ; each greeting eye
He met with transport new ; the name of son
He long enjoy’d ; and, from that hour, awoke
To care and grief no more ; thenceforth, were guilt,
And pain, and sorrow, strangers to his breast ;
Peace, with her lovely train, resided there,
And pleasure strew’d his paths ; thro’ mortal life,
Safe was his course and long ; smooth was the bed
Of death, and fairest gleams of op’ning bliss
Shone on his parting spirit ;—for REPENTANCE,
In never-failing streams, had wash’d away
The stains of guilt ; and well he had discharg’d
His debt to JUSTICE, CHARITY and GOD.

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OR REPENTANCE

And pleasure flew the years! This mortal life
Slept by courts, and long! Smooth be the bed
Of death, and faint gleams of opening bliss
Shine on thy parting spirit! Since Repentance
In everlasting flames had walk'd away
The stains of guilt, and well thou hadst discern'd
"Thy debt to JUSTICE, CHARITY and GOD!"
So spoke the form benign; nor seem'd to leave
The blessed couch, till morn, with rosy hand,
Expanded full the golden gates of light;
Retreat, and full of gladness, forward rose,
Full waited grateful praise, with holy zeal,
Then sought in haste, his friend; and o'er
Revolv'd, and repossess'd the vision fair,
With wonder and delight; each greeting eye
He met with transport new; the name of son
He long enjoy'd; and, from that hour, awoke
To care and grief no more; then sorrow, were guilt,
And pain, and sorrow, strangers to his breast;
Peace, with her lovely train, rebb'd there,
And pleasure flew'd his years; this mortal life
Slept by courts and long; time it was the bed
Of death, and faint gleams of opening bliss
Shone on his parting spirit;—for Repentance
In everlasting flames had walk'd away
The stains of guilt, and well he had discern'd
"Thy debt to JUSTICE, CHARITY and GOD!"

W. I. A.